

# TOPS NEWS

October 2006 ♦ Volume 10, Issue 2

The monthly newsletter of TOPS, a Seattle Public K-8 alternative school

## Message from the Principal

Welcome back students and parents - we are off to a great start! The school year opened with a full enrollment of 524 students, and the staff was ready and anxious to greet all of them. Our new staff have all settled in and are doing a great job. We feel very fortunate to have them as part of the TOPS family. This is the first time in TOPS' history that we have a deaf adult and a hard of hearing teacher. They are both fantastic and it is great for the students at TOPS to see all of the manual communication in the building.

Our transportation department is working out the small problems of the busses picking up late. Busses were better this year during our opening. We have 23 busses picking up and dropping off at TOPS.

Welcome to Glen Tamura and Kathy Wickward, our new Site Council chair and assistant chair. We look forward to an outstanding year under their direction.

## Get Out Your Checkbooks Let's Raise Some Dough!

TOPS No-Bake OCT – DEC 2006 - Our Goal Is \$82,000

From the No-Bake Committee

The TOPS No-Bake fund drive is underway! Our goal is to raise \$82,000 and celebrate 100% participation from every family in our delicious TOPS community.

Our annual No-Bake drive is a fund drive, an appeal for funds, a call to action, an affirmation of our programs. This \$82,000 accounts for half our Friends of TOPS budget. It is vital to our continued success. Detailed information of our TOPS budget needs will be included in your No-Bake kick-off packet.



No baking, no parties, no extra volunteer hours - just good old-fashioned donations from the heart. All you have to do is write a check, stuff it in an envelope, lick a stamp and mail it along. Donate early and donate often.

We are going to make this year's No-Bake drive short and sweet. We will be closing the oven earlier this year to count the cupcakes (okay, the cold hard cash).

Read more about the No-Bake on page 11

**Curriculum Nights:** Hopefully you didn't forget Curriculum Nights, and for those of you scheduled in October, we look forward to seeing you!

Tuesday, October 3:  
5:00 p.m. DHH  
6:15 p.m. 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> grades  
7:15 p.m. 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> grades

We have our CARE program again which focuses on inclusiveness and anti-bullying. Our annual all-school assembly was held Tuesday, September 19, at 10 a.m. in the Gym for the launching of our 2<sup>nd</sup> year of our bullying-prevention program, called "CARE," Coaching All to Respect Everyone.

*Continued on page 2*



photo by Don Zenke



photo by Don Zenke

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**Principal:** Clara Scott

**Assistant Principal:**  
Gerrit Kischner

**Site Council Chair:**  
Glen Tamura

### NEWSLETTER ONLINE

The TOPS newsletters are available online in PDF format before the printed copy arrives in your mailbox! From the TOPS home page, <http://www.topsk8.org>, click on Latest Newsletter in the Quick Links section.



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## NOVEMBER TOPS NEWS DEADLINE

Friday, October 13. Submissions to [topsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:topsnewsletter@gmail.com)

## ABOUT THE OUTRAGEOUS PUBLISHING SERVICE

Welcome to the second newsletter of the 2006-07 school year. Jamie Flaxman and Ann Simonson edit, Doug Manelski handles photos, design, and layout, and Jane Summerfield, Peggy Maraghe, and Roxanne Robinson get it mailed off to you. Don Zemke provides many of our photos. G & H Printing prints the newsletter.

We need your submissions: calendar additions, classroom news and news from the larger community, faculty notes, committee reports, opinions, profiles, compliments, congratulations, children's art, photos, and anything else significant to the TOPS community.

Submit your contributions by email to [topsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:topsnewsletter@gmail.com) or to the newsletter box in the main office. Please send photos to [topsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:topsnewsletter@gmail.com). The deadline for the November issue is October 13. Would you like to edit or otherwise help with our newsletter? Newcomers welcome. Please contact Jamie and Ann at [topsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:topsnewsletter@gmail.com).

# Welcome New Staff

By Ann Simonson

We welcome one more new teacher to TOPS this year: Guy Lawrence. Guy is teaching 6<sup>th</sup> grade Math and Science. He spent the last two years at Denny Middle School, one year teaching 7<sup>th</sup> grade Math, and the second year teaching 7<sup>th</sup> grade Math and Science. He also spent half a year teaching 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Math at Washington Middle School before he taught at Denny. Guy received his BA in Kinesiology from the University of Washington. He went to Antioch for his teaching certificate and Masters degree in Education.

Guy has known from the start that he wanted to teach middle school Math. He likes the unpredictable personalities of middle school students and really enjoys children that age. He finds it exciting to teach middle school math because the math you learn in middle school is math you'll use for the rest of your life. Guy's Masters thesis was on contextual-



Guy Lawrence

ized curriculums in middle school Math, in which he explored how to teach Math in a more meaningful way. He saw too many middle school students becoming disengaged in math classes, and he wants to work to solve that problem.

Guy is very excited to be at TOPS! When he was working on his Masters degree, he interviewed quite a few middle school teachers, and one of them was Lana Fuller at TOPS (our former 6<sup>th</sup> grade Math and Science teacher, now the Kindergarten PEAK teacher on maternity leave). He concluded that TOPS was his number one choice of schools; he hoped that some day he would teach here. He is a strong supporter of the K-8 model and believes it's the best way to give middle school students the confidence they need for high school.

Guy is very well traveled; ask him about the trips he's taken. He spent five years traveling around the world, teaching scuba diving in many exotic locales. In his free time he enjoys many outdoor activities, including wind surfing and cross-country skiing. He is a competitive kayak racer, and he plays the trumpet!

A warm welcome to all new staff.

### Message from the Principal continued from page 1

Catrice Dennis, who was our AmeriCorps volunteer last year, is a part-time hourly employee this year. She is assisting on the playground as well as helping with middle school projects and other student activities. Our playground supervisors are wearing bright colored vests this year so that students can easily identify them in case of injuries or emergencies.

### Thank you to:

- Randi Niemer and her volunteers for their hard work in having kindergarten packets ready for their orientation and all of the other packets ready and in the teachers' classrooms before the first day of school!

- Our Kitchen Manager, Annie Meyer. We so appreciate her - she is so efficient and pleasant to staff, students, and parents. We hope her job is made easier this year without "reduced lunch category". Now it is paid or free.

- Our CSJ (Coalition for Social Justice) committee - they called the new parents and personally invited them to the new student orientation. And to the ASB for providing students to host the New Student Orientation on September 5 as well.

- Scott and Mogos who did such an outstanding job of getting our building ready for the start of school in Saream's absence. Welcome back to Saream after his long absence! We missed you!

Cheers!!

- Clara

# Welcome to TOPS!

By Clara LaPatra, Grade 6

Welcome new TOPS families! Are you ready for a great year? Here at TOPS there is nothing you should miss out of so many choices. You can do after school sports such as soccer, basketball, and lots of others. You can participate in the school plays, talent shows, camp, dances and the Taste of TOPS all the while learning new things you would have never dreamed of doing. In class you will go to Seattle Children's Theater plays and much more.

To make sure all the students are safe and acting well, we have come up with an Anti-Bullying program called CARE, which stands for "Coaching All to Respect

Everyone." This program involves kids and teachers working together to try and make our school a safe and better place. Every day we will have meetings that will discuss people and if they have been bullied and how we will solve the problem.

I believe that TOPS will become the best place it can be if we all work together and try to help each other and with that cooperation our school and students can achieve anything. I hope you are looking forward to a great year at TOPS and have as much fun as I have had.



photos by Don Zemke

# Why I Like TOPS

By Edna Pennylegion-Hurley, Grade 6

TOPS has a great anti-bullying program at the school. The teachers at the school really encourage our no bullying policy at our school. Weekly we have CARE meetings that help support that. The teachers and staff really enforce this and it is very good to know that we all belong at TOPS.

TOPS is an amazing school for many reasons. We have great teachers, amazing staff, and everyone here is happy and welcoming. If you are just com-

ing into TOPS Kindergarten we have two great teachers, Joan and Joby. They are a great welcome to TOPS and you get to do a ton of fun things in Kindergarten from making your own recycled paper to watching the salmon swim up the stream on a class field trip. Also you get your own 5<sup>th</sup> grade buddy. From Kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade TOPS is a great school to learn and play. We hope you have a great experience here.

# A Message from the Site Council Chair

## TOPS Site Council Retreat

### Date/Time:

September 30, 2006,  
10 a.m. - noon

### Location:

TOPS Library

### Agenda:

1. Description of roles and responsibilities of Site Council representatives.
2. Planning of year's priorities – potential areas of emphasis:
  - a. Finance Committee – develop policies, potentially create separate committee to oversee fundraising efforts
  - b. School Board / District Liaison Committee (new) – develop relationships school board members and school district staff.
  - c. Alternative Education Committee (new) – definition of alternative education at TOPS
  - d. Communication Committee (new) – improve communication with TOPS community

We had our first Site Council meeting of the year on September 13. There was an excellent turnout, and my thanks to all of our incredible Site Council Representatives for their energy. It is exciting to hear about the hard work of students, parents, and staff to make TOPS even better.

We will be having a Site Council Retreat on Saturday, September 30, from 10 a.m.- noon in the TOPS library. Everyone in the TOPS community, including staff and parents, are welcome to come

to this retreat. This is an excellent opportunity to gain a better understanding of the workings of your Site Council, and for you to have input into our priorities for this coming year. In particular, there are a number of potential areas of emphasis for this coming year where the input from members of the TOPS community is very important. I especially invite those with a particular interest in the areas listed to the left to come to the retreat.

*Glen Tamura - Site Council Chair*

## CARE Update

*By Jodi Newman*

This year we are starting phase two of our CARE (Coach All to Respect Everyone) program. Last year we focused on 1) developing a common definition of bullying, 2) reporting bullying, and 3) teaching core CARE concepts such as positively responding to bullying, empathy, and inclusion. Throughout the year we monitored our progress using student surveys, student bullying reports, and by having on-going discussions with students about bullying.

The results provided valuable insight into how we can improve the CARE program during the 2006-2007 school year:

### Definitions of Bullying:

In both fall 2005 and spring 2006, 90 percent of the students depicted bullying as involving negative actions such as hitting, teasing, excluding, being mean, and hurting feelings.

This year we will continue to reinforce our shared definition of bullying as negative actions that are ongoing and involve a power imbalance.

### Reporting Bullying

Last year, elementary students were more likely to report bullying than middle school students.

Student bullying reports from the 2005-2006 school year indicate that the majority of bullying incidents at TOPS involved verbal behaviors such as name calling and teasing. These incidents were dealt with on a weekly basis.

This year, the student bullying report system is being refined so that we can respond more quickly to student concerns. Also, special attention will be given to the Middle School program so that our older students will feel more comfortable reporting bullying.

### Core CARE Concepts

In both fall 2005 and spring 2006, over three-quarters of the students indicated that they would seek adult help if they were bullied.

The percent of students who reported that they would use other positive responses such as telling the bully to stop or

ignoring the bully increased slightly from 55 percent in the fall of 2005 to 59 percent in the spring of 2006.

Results from last year indicate that students can articulate positive responses to bullying and are capable of discussing concepts such as empathy and inclusion. This year, we are going to focus on turning all of the positive talk into constructive action.

### What Can Adults Do?

Last spring we asked students to respond to the question "What could the adults at TOPS do to make bullying happen less often?" Most of the students indicated that adults need to be more aware of bullying and take action to stop it from happening. Students wrote:

"Pay attention, do something, stop it from happening." (8th grader).

"Watch what goes on more closely so they could stop it when it starts, stricter punishments." (6th grader).

"Supervise children more, if someone is mean actually do something about it so it does not happen again, BE STRICTER!" (3rd grader).

"Meet with moms and dads." (1st grader).

In response to this feedback, the adults at TOPS will continue to keep our eyes and ears open so that we are aware of bullying incidents. We will also intervene to stop bullying when it happens. Finally, we are hoping to increase parent involvement in the CARE program.

If you would like to volunteer to be on the CARE committee, please contact Gerrit Kischner at (206) 252-3510 or [gakischner@seattleschools.org](mailto:gakischner@seattleschools.org).

*Jodi Newman is a graduate student at the University of Washington in Educational Psychology. She is helping for the second year as a researcher and consultant for the CARE Program at TOPS.*

## A Monthly Calendar Of Holidays

# WHAT TOPS FAMILIES ARE CELEBRATING

Compiled by Lynne Goodrich (CSJ Member)

### October 2006 Holidays

**October 1: Yom Kippur (Jewish)** The Day of Atonement starts at sundown. The most important and holiest day of the year for Jews, it is devoted to prayer, fasting, and asking and granting forgiveness for one's transgressions.

**October 2: Birth of Mohandas "Mahatma" Gandhi (India)** Born October 2, 1869. One of India's greatest spiritual and political leaders, he led a campaign of peaceful civil disobedience which led to India's independence from Great Britain.

**October 6: Moon Festival (China, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Vietnam)** Festival focuses on the mythology of the Moon Goddess. A harvest festival at the time the moon is brightest and is a time to pay homage to ancestors.

**October 7: Sukkot (Jewish)** Begins at sunset and lasts for eight days. The word sukkot means "booth" and recalls the time that Israelites wandered in the desert during their journey to the promised land and lived in the suk-kots. Temporary dwellings can be erected at home and decorated with fruits of the harvest.

**October 11: National Coming Out Day (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender)** Sponsored by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Coming Out Project, it is an ongoing campaign to empower gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Americans to live openly and honestly about their lives.

**October 12: Columbus Day (U.S.)** Traditionally celebrates Christopher Columbus' arrival in the Americas in 1492. In some areas it is celebrated as Native American Day instead, due to the view by some that Columbus Day celebrates conquest and genocide.

**October 12: Dia de la Raza (Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Uruguay, Venezuela)** Columbus Day is celebrated as a fiesta to celebrate the

common interests and Spanish heritage of the Latin American peoples.

**October 21: Diwali (Hindu)** Festival of Lights and fireworks celebrates fortune, wealth and generosity for four days. Because there are many regions in India, there are many manifestations of the Diwali festival.

**October 24: Eid-ul-Fitr (Muslim)** Marks the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting, and is a festival of great celebration marked by a gift to charity.

**October 29: U.S. Supreme Court orders an end to all school segregation in 1969.**

**October 29: Daylight Savings Time ends** In an effort to conserve resources for the efforts of WWI, Congress approved a law that altered each U.S. time zone's standard time by moving clocks ahead one hour. The plan was not popular and ended after seven months. DST was utilized again during WWII. Following the war, states were allowed to observe DST at their discretion. Currently, Arizona, Hawaii, part of Indiana, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands do not celebrate DST.

**October 31: Reformation Sunday (Christian)** Many Protestant churches commemorate Reformation Day on the Sunday preceding October 31.

**October 31: Halloween** In ancient times, the Celtic New Year on November 1 was preceded the night before by Samhain Eve, in which they believed the spirits of the dead returned to earth. Later, Christians adapted Celtic customs and celebration of the dead was changed to a celebration of saints and martyrs of the Catholic church. Immigrants from Scotland and Ireland brought customs such as carving jack-o'-lanterns to the United States. Halloween celebrations were common in the U.S. by the 1870's.

## Paris, Here We Come

By Marianne Trangen, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher

*Ooh La La!*

We have the biggest group yet already signed up to come to Paris and London with TOPS this spring. It is not too late for you to join us. In fact, if you sign up by December 1, you can save some money. We will leave on Friday, April 6 and return on Sunday, April 15. This tour is for TOPS students, their parents, their family members, and/or their friends. If you are interested, please contact Marianne at [mtrangen@raincity.com](mailto:mtrangen@raincity.com). You can find out more at [www.myexplorica.com/Trangen-9470..](http://www.myexplorica.com/Trangen-9470..)

# CSJ Corner

Welcome back to the CSJ corner where you can look to find out what the Coalition for Social Justice has planned each month.

This year we are trying something *new and different*. We plan to host special events each month that we hope will increase participation and dialogue among parents and staff about issues and concerns that are tied to the TOPS mission and vision. In the coming year CSJ will focus on Learning Differences, Differences Among Families, and the Anti-Bullying Program.

**On October 6**, we will kick off a film series called **TOPS Movie Nights** (see below).

**On November 2**, we will present an evening with Jodi Newman from the University of Washington to hear about the surveys and progress of her research on TOPS' CARE Program.

**On December 7**, we will continue to spotlight TOPS' teachers with a focus on Middle School.

The purpose of all of these events will be to strengthen our community through shared ideas and dialogue. We hope you will join us!

**TOPS Movie Night:** We will kick off a film series **Friday night October 6** with a very humorous and thought-provoking film titled *People Like Us: Social Class in America*. More information about the film is available on the flyer in this Newsletter.

Doors open at 6:00 pm and the film will show at 6:30. There will be time for discussion at intermission and following the film. The evening will end by 9:00. Come when you can.

Sandwiches, snacks, and drinks will be provided. There will be pizza and age-appropriate movies for children at Kids Co. Call 252-3510 to make a reservation for child-care.

**Curriculum Nights Documentaries:** At Curriculum Nights, CSJ and Jodi Newman will show short documentary films that introduce parents to the skills their children are learning in class as part of the CARE Program. Each of the three films—*Second Step* (K-3), *Steps to Respect* (4-6), and *Let's Get Real* (7-8), will be shown in the TOPS Library, before and after families meet in their children's classrooms. See the GO-HOME for the schedule.

*CSJ is a group of parents, staff, and administrators who work together in support of the stated mission and vision of TOPS. The purpose of our work is to educate ourselves and the school community about issues of academic equity, cultural diversity, and social justice as they affect our school and the broader community.*

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## Mandarin Chinese Program Enters 2<sup>nd</sup> Year and Prepares to Expand

*By Deborah Wang Ferguson*

Good news for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders: you can now add Mandarin Chinese to the list of after-school activities available to you at TOPS.

This year, we are expanding our offerings of Mandarin Chinese classes. They will now be available from Kindergarten through grade 5.

Hong Jiang will return to teach two classes, for grades 1-2 and 3-5. She is the co-founder and principle teacher at the Seattle Chinese Academy in Bothell. This year she will also be teaching Chinese for the Bellevue school district.

Xiao Yu Jackson will once again teach the Kindergarten Mandarin class. Xiao Yu is the Chinese language interpreter at TOPS. She is currently pursuing a Masters in Social Work at the University of Washington.

This is only the second year of the Mandarin Chinese Program. Last year, we offered only two classes, both of which were fully enrolled. At the end of the year, the TOPS Site Council agreed to fund the program, so we hope to offer reduced price tuitions to all of our students.

The Grades 1-2 and 3-5 classes will begin November 7, and will meet after school once a week, grades 1-2 on Thursdays and grades 3-5 on Tuesdays, from 3:30 to 4:15 p.m. Sign-up sheets will be out soon. Kindergarten Mandarin will also be a once a week class, and will begin after Winter Break.

If you would like more information about the program, or would like to lend a hand, please contact me at [homeferguson@yahoo.com](mailto:homeferguson@yahoo.com)

# TOPS Historical Society

By Toby Harris, TOPS parent since 1993

TOPS started out as the vision of a small group of parents, mostly from the Central District, who approached the Seattle School District to start a new alternative elementary school during the magnet program era. Art, music, camps, speech, and drama, honoring diversity, and using the city have all been ongoing elements of the TOPS program throughout its history. To familiarize all of us with its development, challenges, various facilities, and innovations, we offer you an overview timeline. Watch for future articles detailing other aspects and more details of our history.

1974 Parents are allowed to start alternative program at Latona Elementary.

1975 District staff decide there are too many students from the Central District (CD) enrolled at AEIII (Escuela Latona). They require either a new alternative program in the CD or the transfer of CD students to their regularly assigned schools. Parents and a teacher or two develop new alternative program and find support from Bob Bass, Stevens Elementary Principal, who is willing to house the program at Stevens.

1976 The Garfield Area Option Program (GAOP) begins at Stevens School and serves the CD. Topics program is introduced as a major feature of the program.

1979 City School concept is pursued.

1980 Seattle School District reorganizes area boundaries, doing away with the Garfield area. The program changes name to The Option Program at Stevens (TOPS).

1985-87 Parent activists spend two years meeting with District administrators to obtain official alternative school status. The main advantage of this tactic was to gain a Head Teacher. During that period, alternative schools lost their Head Teacher positions due to budget cuts while TOPS became an official alternative school.\*

1987-88 Superintendent Kendrick spearheads a "Plan to Strengthen Seattle Schools." The plan calls for alternative programs to be sited on their own campus and be large enough to accommodate 300 students. TOPS staff and parents engaged in the



*Seward Elementary School, 1913 Courtesy Paul Dorpat*

planning process support expansion of TOPS and seek a location within their planning unit with a strong preference for Seward. It didn't happen.

1988-1989 Long-range planning efforts to expand TOPS to a K-8 school on their own campus continue. In December of 1989, the School Board approves the proposal with a grade level to be added each year over the next three years. The move is scheduled for the 1991-92 school year.

1990 TOPS begins the year with a 6th grade! TOPS Facilities Committee presents an analysis of potential sites for its K-8 program, citing Seward as the best choice. Superintendent Kendrick makes a written commitment that TOPS be placed at Seward School in 1991, temporarily, pending the outcome of a District-wide Facilities Master Plan.

1991 TOPS moves to Seward, adds 7th grade, and the Site Council forms.

1992 TOPS is a K-8 school! The K-8 program will expand by one additional class per grade over the next five years, beginning with two kindergarten classes. They previously had only one class per grade. TOPS and the Seattle School District begin planning for the renovation of Seward School.

1993-96 Selection of architect, design work, consultation with the City of Seattle and Eastlake Community Council all proceed. During this time, the TOPS community maintains consistent involvement in the process, led by Debrah Walker, TOPS parent and chair of the Facilities Committee. With active participation by many others in the TOPS community, they successfully honor Seward's historical landmark designation while designing for TOPS' K-8 programs. The redesign of Franklin Avenue is another major aspect of the renovation.

1997 TOPS moves to McDonald School for two years while Seward is remodeled.

1999 TOPS goes home to newly remodeled Seward facility.

2005-06 TOPS parent activists energize to fight the possibility of moving their program to another facility.

\*TOPS was unofficially included in the list of alternative programs prior to that.

For more information about Seward School history, go to [http://www.historylink.org/essays/output.cfm?file\\_id=3244](http://www.historylink.org/essays/output.cfm?file_id=3244)



*Seward School and Rogers Playground, Eastlake neighborhood, 1910*

*Courtesy Seattle Municipal Archives (Neg. 20645)*

# News From the Library and Beyond

By Steve Haines, Librarian

*"Reading is a basic tool in the living of a good life." Mortimer J Adler*

## New Collection in the Library

The library has a new collection of books. The William J. Smith (Mr. Bill) Collection was donated to TOPS by Bill Smith, former TOPS Instructional Assistant. Bill is now assigned to Summit K-12. He left after the self-contained Intermediate Special Education class was moved at the end of the 2005/06 school year.

A Seattle native, Bill has been employed with the Seattle Public Schools for over 30 years. In 1996 Bill established a Scholarship Trust to benefit SPS students. He first started his Scholarship Library Collection at West Woodland Elementary School, where he attended. From there he has contributed to each school he has been associated with, including a "Social Justice" collection at Harvey Milk Civil Rights School in San Francisco.

He now leaves his legacy with us: 85 books chosen for the primary grades, to be used by students in the classroom. The topics of the books include countries, biographies, life cycles, geography, animals, and holidays. The books are designed for emergent readers using color photographs throughout, with brief accompanying text. Each book has a bookplate and a green dot on the spine for easy identification. We certainly appreciate this generous donation and will do our best to take good care of the collection, which is located on the top counter at the south end of the library.

Fall is the time for new books and this one comes with the heightened anticipation of the 13<sup>th</sup> and final installment in the Series of Unfortunate Events by Lemony



*The new William J. Smith collection at TOPS photo by Steve Haines*

Snicket. The End To Dreadful to Picture is due to be released on Friday, October 13. I discovered this bit of information while browsing the University Bookstore's website at [www.bookstore.washington.edu](http://www.bookstore.washington.edu). As an added bonus Lemony Snicket will be at Town Hall Thursday, October 26 at 6pm. Tickets are \$5.00 and can be purchased at "UBooks." Another outstanding independent bookseller, All For Kids Books, has a website, [www.allforkidsbooks](http://www.allforkidsbooks), worth visiting to discover new books and the schedule of the many authors that come to their store. These stores have both knowledgeable staff, and well-stocked shelves; in fact they should have all the books on our wish list which can be found on the new TOPS website, [www.topsk8.org](http://www.topsk8.org), under Academics-Library.



*Students looking at books from the new William J. Smith collection. photo by Steve Haines*

# The Spanish Program at TOPS

By Sharon Mentyka

The TOPS Spanish Language program is a before/after school program open to grades 1-8. Students attend a 45-minute Spanish class twice weekly for 20 weeks. This year, we will be starting the program earlier in the school year so that our wonderful instructor, Maestra Rebecca Rabbitt, can involve the children in the important Spanish Dia de los Muertos celebration in early November.

Since 1997, TOPS parents, staff, and faculty have been exploring opportunities for foreign language learning for TOPS students while not overburdening our teachers, or threatening current curriculum and enrichment programs. The level of support among TOPS families for a Spanish language program remains high.

For the school year 2006-07, we are hoping to offer three classes, based on enrollment:

- Beginning Spanish: grades 1-3, Monday and Friday, 3:30 - 4:15 p.m.
- Continuing Spanish: grades 3-5, Tuesday and Thursday, 3:30 - 4:15 p.m.
- Advanced Spanish: grades 5-8, Tuesday and Thursday 8:00 - 8:45 a.m.

Please note: at this time, we cannot accommodate beginning Spanish students in the upper grades (5-8).

The bulk of the Spanish Language and Culture program cost is parent-funded. Parents currently pay approximately \$250.00 per student for 40 classes of instruction (45 minutes twice a week for 20 weeks). While covering the cost of instruction, the funding also provides a reserve fund for language books and materials and to ensure future scholarship funding, and this year we will be adding Spanish language software to computers in the TOPS library. The program also offers partial scholarships, ensuring that the program is accessible to all families who wish to participate, regardless of their financial situation.

Please contact Spanish Committee parent coordinator Sharon Mentyka at 223-0681 or email [sharon@pidseattle.com](mailto:sharon@pidseattle.com) if you are interested in your child attending Spanish classes.

Watch for registration details and forms on the TOPS website and in the TOPS go-home soon!

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## TOPS P.E.

By Don Zemke and Eric Herndon

Starting off the school year in P.E. is great because we already know most of the kids. It's more like an annual reunion where we have the privilege of getting together again, finding out how everybody's doing, and what they've been up to over the summer.

We started the school year with cooperative group activities and then progressed to Frisbee disc sports. We were amazed by how well the students worked together, how much they remembered from our CARE meetings, and they had a lot of fun.

This year we have a bunch of Ultimate Frisbee enthusiasts, evidenced by over sixty 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> graders turning out for the middle school team, and many younger students having fun throwing, catching, and playing in P.E.

We finished week two with our first middle school "Life Sports Friday" where students sailed at the Center For Wooden Boats, did rock climbing, lifted weights, did conditioning at "Club TOPS" (on the stage), worked on their alternative sports skills, practiced racket sports, and did swing dancing.

We are looking forward to having an excellent year, your kids are great!



photos by Don Zemke

# *TOPS Movie Night*

*Friday, October 6<sup>th</sup> 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.*

*TOPS Library*

## *People Like Us: Social Class in America*



**Summary:** *People Like Us* is a humorous and thought-provoking film about social class in America. "It's the 800 pound gorilla...that most Americans don't think about." Whether we live in suburban gated communities or trailer parks, whether we drink Bud or Bordeaux, class plays a role in how we see ourselves in relation to others. Like race, it can often determine opportunity and access. The documentary travels the country presenting stories and a cast of characters that help make the connections between our daily lives and the larger issues of class. *People Like Us* does not pretend to be a definitive documentary about class in America, but it can serve as a catalyst for discussion as it poses questions about self-perception, stereotypes, and ways in which Americans view one another.

*"Dazzling—changes the way you see the world."  
The Baltimore Sun*

**TOPS Movie Night**--- *People Like Us* kicks off a new series of entertaining and engaging films sponsored by CSJ to encourage participation and dialogue among parents and staff about issues that are tied to the TOPS mission and vision. We hope you will join us and be a part of these ongoing discussions throughout the year.

Doors open at 6:00 pm. Film will begin at 6:30. There will be time for discussion at intermission and following the film. Come when you can.

Sandwiches, snacks, drinks, and of course popcorn will be served  
Childcare provided via Kids Co; age-appropriate movie and pizza provided

*To reserve childcare, call 252-3510*

For more information contact Bonnie Cech at [bcech@cechsystems.com](mailto:bcech@cechsystems.com).

This event is sponsored by Coalition for Social Justice.

***Newsletter Layout Volunteer Needed***  
Email [topsnewsletter@gmail.org](mailto:topsnewsletter@gmail.org)

# Frequently Asked Questions About The No-Bake

## ***What is the Annual TOPS No-Bake Fund Drive?***

At TOPS we don't bake.... We donate. It's easy! Each fall TOPS has a good old-fashioned fund drive. Just get out your checkbook, write a check to FRIENDS OF TOPS, and mail it off! We do not ask our kids to hit the streets to raise funds. We don't have a bake sale. We don't sell candy or magazines. TOPS has two fundraisers: the fall No-Bake fund drive and our spring school auction. Each is vital to ensuring our continued support of FRIENDS OF TOPS.

## ***What is our \$ Goal this Year?***

We are reaching for \$82,000 this year.

## ***How much should our family donate to the No-Bake?***

We welcome your donation of any amount... whether your family can give \$10 or \$1000. Last year we averaged approximately \$200 per family.

## ***How many families donate to the TOPS No-Bake?***

Our goal is to receive a donation from 100% of the TOPS families. We are a community 400 families strong! In past years, we have celebrated the participation of over 90% of our families and this year we would love to receive a donation from every family.

## ***Where do we send our No-Bake donation?***

Mail your donation: TOPS NO-BAKE 2500 Franklin Ave E., Seattle, WA 98102

OR deliver your donation to the No-Bake Box in the TOPS Office.

## ***What is the deadline for No-Bake donations?***

Our No-Bake ends on December 31. We will gladly take donations until the first week of January due to our long winter break.

## ***How are our No-Bake donations used?***

Look closely at where our No-Bake funds are used. Scroll down the following list and recognize the many ways your No-Bake donation serves your child, your family, and our community.

## **Here are just a few of the programs supported directly by your donation:**

- \*our school counselor, Jennifer
- \*our elementary art teacher, Cynthia
- \*elementary science with Mr. Bloedel
- \*science materials for all grade levels
- \*school directory and newsletters
- \*tutoring
- \*literacy block
- \*library supplies & multicultural books
- \*middle school & elementary plays
- \*choir program
- \*instrumental music program
- \*Oleweus anti-bullying program

\*volunteer coordinator

\*3<sup>rd</sup> grade drama program

\*Taste of TOPS

\*8<sup>th</sup> grade passage

\*ACT Theatre Young Playwright program

\*supplies for every teacher & classroom

\*childcare

\*Spanish, Chinese, & Sailing lesson scholarships

\*Sports team uniforms

\*Safety committee

PLUS many many more beneficial educational opportunities for our kids

## ***Why do the families have to fund core programs as well as enrichment programs?***

The Seattle School District is in financial crisis. Increasingly, the families of TOPS have been called upon to fund core programs in addition to the enrichment that we think is important to our children and our community.

## ***How often are the families contacted about the No-Bake?***

The No-Bake campaign consists of three letter appeals mailed to parents. When a family donates, their name is removed from the mailing list. We will limit emails from the committee to four over the length of the twelve-week campaign. Room reps and teachers may send along their own messages. WEEKLY updates of our totals are available on the TOPS website and are posted throughout the TOPS building.

## ***Can we use our credit card to donate to the No-Bake?***

Yes! We can accept donations via MasterCard or Visa. You fill out the donation form in your No-Bake letter or download a form on the No-Bake link on the TOPS Website. You can also contact Kris Johnston, the No-Bake treasurer, at 285-0284 for more information.

## ***Is my donation to the No-Bake tax deductible?***

Absolutely. FRIENDS OF TOPS is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit entity (TAX ID 94-3142402).

## ***Can my employer match my No-Bake charitable donation?***

Many, many employers will match the charitable donation of their employees. Your employer's matching donation will double your gift to FRIENDS OF TOPS. Please contact your human resources department to fill out the necessary form. FRIENDS OF TOPS is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit entity (TAX ID 94-3142402).

## ***Where can I get more information about the No-Bake?***

Budget Info & No-Bake Updates: <http://www.topsk8.org/>

## ***Questions about your donation:***

Kris Johnston, No-Bake Treasurer, 285-0284 [kjohnston@columbiahospitality.com](mailto:kjohnston@columbiahospitality.com)



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## 2006-2007 TOPS Calendar

Send your events and dates to our webmaster, Jack Lee, at [webmaster@topsk8.org](mailto:webmaster@topsk8.org).  
 Please check Thursday Go-Homes and the web site for updates

|                  |  |  |  |                    |   |
|------------------|--|--|--|--------------------|---|
| <b>September</b> |  |  |  |                    |   |
| 30(Sa)           | Site Council Retreat 10 a.m. – noon,<br>TOPS Library   | 10 (F)<br>22 (W)<br>23-24 (Th-F)                   | Veterans Day; no school<br>1-hour early dismissal<br>Thanksgiving<br>holiday; no school  | <b>March</b>       |   |
|                  |  |  |  | 7 (W)              | Professional development block<br>time;<br>2-hour early dismissal                                   |
| <b>October</b>   |  |  |  | 14 (W)             | Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.  |
| 3 (T)            | Curriculum night – DHH, 5-6 p.m.,<br>1st-2nd grades,<br>6:00-7:00 p.m.,<br>3rd-4th grades<br>7:15-8:15 p.m.<br>BLT meeting, 4 p.m.<br>CSJ movie night, 6-9<br>p.m., TOPS Library | <b>December</b>                                    |  | 16 (F)             | Professional development day; no<br>school  |
|                  |  | 5 (T)<br>7 (Th)<br>13 (W)<br>15 (F)<br>18-29 (M-F) | BLT meeting, 4 p.m.<br>CSJ meeting, 6:30-8 p.m.<br>Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.<br>1-hour early dismissal<br>Winter break; no school | <b>April</b>       |   |
| 6 (F)            |  |  |  | 4(W)<br>9-13 (M-F) | Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.<br>Spring break;<br>no school  |
| 11 (W)           | Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.<br>DHH, grades 1&2 to SCT   | <b>January</b>                                     |  | 20 (F)             | End of third quarter  |
| 13 (F)           | Professional development day; no<br>school   | 1 (M)<br>2 (T)<br>10 (W)<br>15 (M)                 | Winter break; no school<br>Classes resume<br>Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.<br>Martin Luther King Jr. Day; no<br>school                | <b>May</b>         |   |
| 23-27 (M-F)      | Spirit Week  | <b>February</b>                                    |  | 5 (Sa)             | TOPS Auction at the Asian Re-<br>source Center  |
| 27 (F)           | Middle school dance, 6:30 P.m.   | 1 (Th)<br>2 (F)<br>7 (W)                           | End of semester<br>Day between semesters; no school<br>Professional development block time;<br>2-hour early dismissal                  | 9 (W)<br>16 (W)    | Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.<br>Professional development block<br>time;<br>2-hour early dismissal |
| 25 (W)           | Professional development block<br>time;<br>2-hour early dismissal  | 14 (W)<br>19 (M)<br>20-23 (T-F)                    | Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.<br>Presidents Day; no school<br>Mid-winter break; no<br>school  | 28 (M)             | Memorial Day; no school   |
| 31 (T)           | Kindergarten Salmon Parade   |  |  | <b>June</b>        |   |
| <b>November</b>  |  |  |  | 20 (W)             | Last student day  |
| 2 (Th)           | CSJ meeting, 6:30-8 p.m.   |  |  |                    |   |
| 7 (T)            | BLT meeting, 4 p.m.  |  |  |                    |   |
| 8 (W)            | Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.   |  |  |                    |   |
| 9 (Th)           | End of first quarter   |  |  |                    |   |

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